

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 03806 241059Z

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TAGS: PFOR, DA

SUBJECT: FRIENDLY BANTER BETWEEN DENMARK'S TWO POLITICAL LEADERS

1. SUMMARY: PRIMIN JORGENSEN AND FORMER PRIMIN
HARTLING ENGAGED IN FRIENDLY DISCUSSION ON ROLE OF PRIME
MINISTER AND IN RELATION TO FUTURE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE MODERATE LIBERAL PARTY
PAPER, FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND PARTY CHAIRMAN, POUL
HARTLING, WARNED HIS READERS TO BE PREPARED FOR A POSSIBLE
GENERAL ELECTION IN 1976. ALTHOUGH SHROUDED IN MORE THAN
THE USUAL NUMBER OF IF'S AND BUT'S, HARTLING'S SIGNAL WAS
READ LOUD AND CLEAR BY THE GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.
AKTUEL, THE TRADE UNION FEDERATION DAILY, SNORTED THAT IT WAS
RATHER CURIOUS TO SEE HARTLING ENGAGE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE
JUST BEFORE THE MORE SERIOUS PART OF THE SO-CALLED COMPROMISE
AGREEMENT ON REMEDIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES WAS TO BE DISCUSSED.

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"IT LOOKS AS IF THE MODERATE LIBERALS MIGHT BACK OUT OF THE

AGREEMENT", AKTUELTH WHINED AND "WHO COULD HAVE BELIEVED THAT, CONSIDERING THE RECENT GALLUP STANDING OF THE MODERATE LIBERALS?" (DOWN 4 PERCENT FROM THE ELECTION, FROM 23 PERCENT TO 19 PERCENT).

3. IN A SOMEWHAT MORE RELAXED SPIRIT, AKTUELTH DECIDED THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA, AFTER ALL, TO BRING HARTLING AND THE STILL CONVALESCING PRIMIN ANKER JORGENSEN TOGETHER SO AS TO BE ABLE BETTER TO JUDGE THE SERIOUSNESS, IF ANY, OF HARTLING'S "UN-SPORTSMAN-LIKE" BEHAVIOR. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BOTH OFFICIALS ON DECEMBER 21, THE PAPER FIRST ASKED ABOUT ELECTION POSSIBILITIES IN 1976. THE PRIMIN DECLARED GRANDLY THAT "SINCE THE POPULATION DOES NOT WISH AN ELECTION, THERE WILL BE NONE"; HARTLING HEDGED BY SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH THE BEST THING WOULD PROBABLY BE NO ELECTION, A TENSE SITUATION MIGHT ARISE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE (ECONOMIC) POLITICAL DECISIONS SOON TO BE MADE, WHICH COULD LEAVE THE GOVT FACED WITH A MAJORITY AGAINST IT. NEVERTHELESS, SAID HARTLING, "I DO NOT WISH FOR AN ELECTION." AFTER STILL ANOTHER GLASS OF THE TRADITIONAL DANISH CHRISTMAS LIQUID "GLOGG" (A WARM SPICED AND SPIKED REDWINE) SERVED BY MRS. ANKER JORGENSEN, THE TWO PRIMINS, PAST AND PRESENT, READILY AGREED THAT THEIR COOPERATION IN THE FOLKETING SO FAR HAD BEEN WISE AND SENSIBLE, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS STILL TO BE IRONED OUT.

4. IN CONCLUSION, THE AKTUELTH REPORTER WAS DEVIOUS ENOUGH TO ASK WHETHER THE TWO COULD AGREE ON HOW FAR A PRIME MINISTER SHOULD GO IN HIS CRITICISM OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND PERSONS. THE PAPER HAD JORGENSEN'S CRITICISM OF FRANCO IN MIND, IT IS EXPLAINED. IN REPLY JORGENSEN REITERATED HIS WELL-KNOWN POSITION: "IN MY BELIEF, ONE MUST EXPRESS ONE'S FEELING ABOUT DICTATORS AND DICTATORSHIPS. ONE MUST ALSO BE ABLE TO BE FRANK TO ONE'S FRIENDS AND EXPRESS DISAGREEMENT; OTHERWISE, ONE WOULD NOT BE A TRUE FRIEND." AGAIN, HARTLING WAS THE MORE DIPLOMATIC: "IT IS ONLY NATURAL TO HAVE AN OPINION AND TO EXPRESS IT. IF I TURNED AGAINST (WHAT ANKER JORGENSEN JUST SAID), I WOULD RISK BEING CALLED AN OPPONENT OF THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH - OR BEING LABELED A FRANCO-SUPPORTER. BUT LET HIM REST. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MATTER IS THAT WHEN YOU ARE A PRIME MINISTER, YOU ARE NOT "JUST" A PRIVATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 COPENH 03806 241059Z

CITIZEN. YOU DO NOT EXPRESS YOURSELF "JUST" AS A PRIVATE PERSON OR ON BEHALF OF YOUR PARTY. WHENEVER A DANISH PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSES HIMSELF, FOREIGN COUNTRIES READ IT AS DANISH OPINION. AS A PRIME MINISTER, ONE IS, THEREFORE, LIMITED. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PERSONEL FREEDOM OF SPEECH, THIS IS SOMETHING INHERENT IN THE OFFICE". ANKER JORGENSEN CONCEDED THAT IT INVOLVED AN ACT OF EQUILIBRIUM AND THAT IT OFTEN WAS DIFFICULT TO STEER A STRAIGHT COURSE.

HE WOULD NOT YIELD, HOWEVER, ON THE FRANCO QUESTION: "I AM SURE THAT THERE IS BROAD AGREEMENT THAT THE FRANCO RULE WAS A FASCIST DICTATORSHIP - Milder than Hitler's and Mussolini's, to be sure, but based on the same premises."

5. COMMENT: FORMER PRIMIN HARTLING HAS WARNED THE GOVERNMENT COALITION THAT AN ELECTION IS POSSIBLE IN 1976 IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ABIDE BY ITS SEPTEMBER ECONOMIC COMPROMISE. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS MORE BARK THAN BITE TO HIS WARNING, AND THAT HIS ELECTION FORECASTS ARE AIMED PARTLY AT BOLSTERING THE MORALE OF HIS PARTY STALWARTS AND PARTLY TO KEEP THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ON THEIR TOES.

6. HARTLING HAS ALSO TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHIDE ANKER JORGENSEN FOR HIS RATHER HEAVY-HANDED HANDLING OF THE SPANISH SITUATION, REMINDING HIM POINTEDLY THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PRIME MINISTER SPEAKING ENTIRELY PERSONALLY WHEN HE IS IN OFFICE.
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